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Information and communications technologies for development

Argentina:* draft resolution

Information and communications technologies for development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/183 of 21 December 2001, 57/238 of 20 December 2002, 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, 59/220 of 22 December 2004, 60/252 of 27 March 2006, 62/182 of 19 December 2007, 63/202 of 19 December 2008, 64/187 of 21 December 2009 and 65/141 of 20 December 2010, Economic and Social Council resolutions 2006/46 of 28 July 2006, 2008/3 of 18 July 2008, 2009/7 of 24 July 2009 and 2010/2 of 19 July 2010 and other relevant resolutions,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/16 of 26 July 2011 on the assessment of the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society,

Noting that cultural diversity is the common heritage of humankind and that the information society should be founded on and stimulate respect for cultural identity, cultural and linguistic diversity, traditions and religions and foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and noting also that the promotion, affirmation and preservation of diverse cultural identities and languages as reflected in relevant agreed United Nations documents, including the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,[1] will further enrich the information society,

Recalling the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

[1] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-first Session, Paris, 15 October-3 November 2001*, vol. 1 and corrigendum, *Resolutions*, chap. V, resolution 25, annex I.

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10 to 12 December 2003,[3] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[4] and the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[5] and endorsed by the General Assembly,[6]

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,[6]

Recalling further the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals and its outcome document,[7]

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels,[8]

Noting the establishment of the Broadband Commission for Digital Development at the invitation of the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and taking note of the report of the Commission prepared in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "A 2010 Leadership Imperative: The Future Built on Broadband",[9] which calls for broadband-friendly practice and policies towards the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, to ensure that the potential of broadband connectivity and content are at the service of development,

Recognizing the role of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in assisting the Economic and Social Council as the focal point in the system-wide follow-up, in particular the review and assessment of the progress made in implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, while at the same time maintaining its original mandate on science and technology for development,

Noting the fourteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, held in Geneva from 23 to 27 May 2011,

Recognizing that, while in recent years progress has been made in access to information and communications technologies, including the steady increase in Internet access to nearly one quarter of the world's population, the expanding penetration of cellular telephony and the availability of multilingual content and Internet addresses, the need remains to reduce the digital divide and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all at affordable cost, and recognizing in this regard that less than 18 per cent of the population in developing countries uses the Internet, compared to more than 60 per cent in developed countries,

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[3] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.
[4] See resolution 59/220.
[5] See A/60/687.
[6] See resolution 60/252.
[7] See resolution 60/1.
[8] See resolution 65/1.
[9] A/65/64-E/2010/12.
[10] Available from www.broadbandcommission.org.

Reaffirming the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies to promote the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and sustainable economic growth,

Expressing concern about the impact of the ongoing world financial and economic crisis on the positive trends in the diffusion of information and communications technology and the investment needed to ensure universal access to information and communications technologies,

Also expressing concern about the growing gap in broadband provision between developed and developing countries, as well as about the new dimensions that the digital divide has taken on, with respect to the quality of available access, and what it can offer users,

Stressing the need to reduce the digital divide, including with regard to such issues as international interconnection charges for Internet use, and to ensure that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies, are available to all,

Acknowledging that the Internet, a central element of the infrastructure of the information society, has evolved from a research and academic facility into a global facility available to the public,

Recognizing that the international management of the Internet should be multilateral, transparent and democratic, with the full involvement of Governments, the private sector, civil society and international organizations, as stated in paragraph 29 of the Tunis Agenda,

Recognizing also the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters, including public policy issues related to key elements of Internet governance, in order to foster the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet, as well as its role in building partnerships among different stakeholders so as to help in addressing the various issues of Internet governance, while acknowledging the calls for improvements in its working methods,

Reiterating the significance and urgency of the process towards enhanced cooperation in full consistency with the mandate provided in paragraph 71 of the Tunis Agenda and the need for enhanced cooperation to enable Governments on an equal footing to carry out their roles and responsibilities in respect of international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet but not in respect of the day-to-day technical and operational matters that do not impact upon those issues,

Welcoming the efforts undertaken by the host countries in organizing the meetings of the Internet Governance Forum, held in Athens in 2006, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2007, in Hyderabad, India, in 2008, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in 2009, in Vilnius in 2010 and in Nairobi in 2011, respectively,

Recognizing the central role of the United Nations system in promoting development, including with respect to enhancing access to information and communications technologies, inter alia, through partnerships with all relevant stakeholders,

Welcoming, in view of the existing gaps in information and communications technologies infrastructure, the Connect Africa summits held in Kigali in 2007 and in Cairo in 2008, the Connect the Commonwealth of Independent States summit held in Minsk in 2009 and the meeting of Commonwealth countries held in Colombo in 2010, which are regional initiatives aimed at mobilizing human, financial and technical resources to accelerate the implementation of the connectivity goals of the World Summit on the Information Society,

1. *Recognizes* that information and communications technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help to expedite the integration of all countries, especially developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, into the global economy;

2. *Expresses concern* regarding the digital divide in access to information and communications technologies and broadband connectivity between countries at different levels of development, which affects many economically and socially relevant applications in areas such as government, business, health and education, and further expresses concern with regard to the special challenges faced in the area of broadband connectivity by developing countries, including the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and middle-income countries;

3. *Acknowledges* that a gender divide exists as part of the digital divide, and encourages all stakeholders to ensure the full participation of women in the information society and women's access to information and communications technologies;

4. *Stresses* that, for the majority of the poor, the development promise of science and technology, including information and communications technologies, remains unfulfilled, and emphasizes the need to effectively harness technology, including information and communications technologies, to bridge the digital divide;

5. *Also stresses* the important role of Governments in the design of public policies and in the provision of public services responsive to national needs and priorities through, inter alia, the effective use of information and communications technologies, including on the basis of a multi-stakeholder approach, to support national development efforts;

6. *Recognizes* that, in addition to financing by the public sector, financing of information and communications technologies infrastructure by the private sector has come to play an important role in many countries and that domestic financing is being augmented by North-South flows and complemented by South-South cooperation;

7. *Also recognizes* that information and communications technologies present new opportunities and challenges and that there is a pressing need to address the major impediments that developing countries face in accessing the new technologies, such as insufficient resources, infrastructure, education, capacity, investment and connectivity and issues related to technology ownership, standards and flows, and in this regard calls upon all stakeholders to provide adequate resources, enhanced capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries, particularly the least developed countries;

8. *Further recognizes* the immense potential that information and communications technologies have in promoting the transfer of technologies in a wide spectrum of socio-economic activity;

9. *Recognizes* that South-South and triangular cooperation can be useful tools for promoting the development of information and communications technologies;

10. *Encourages* strengthened and continuing cooperation between and among stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of the outcomes of the Geneva[3] and Tunis[4] phases of the World Summit on the Information Society through, inter alia, the promotion of national, regional and international multi-stakeholder partnerships, including public-private partnerships, and the promotion of national and regional multi-stakeholder thematic platforms, in a joint effort and dialogue with developing countries, development partners and actors in the information and communications technologies sector;

11. *Reaffirms* the role of the General Assembly in the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in 2015, as called for in paragraph 111 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, and further decides to conclude during its sixty-seventh session modalities for the review process;

12. *Welcomes* the efforts undertaken by Tunisia, host of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Telecommunication Union and other relevant international and regional organizations, for organizing annually the ICT 4 All Forum and technological exhibition as a platform within the framework of the follow-up to the Summit to promote a dynamic business environment for the information and communications technologies sector worldwide;

13. *Encourages* the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, within their respective mandates, to contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, and emphasizes the need for resources in this regard;

14. *Notes* the organization of the World Summit on the Information Society Forum 2011 in Geneva from 16 to 20 May 2011;

15. *Recognizes* the urgent need to harness the potential of knowledge and technology, and in this regard encourages the United Nations development system to continue its effort to promote the use of information and communications technologies as a critical enabler of development and a catalyst for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

16. *Also recognizes* the role of the United Nations Group on the Information Society as an inter-agency mechanism of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination designed to coordinate United Nations implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society;

17. *Further recognizes* that the Internet governance-related outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society, namely the process towards enhanced cooperation and the convening of the Internet Governance Forum, are to be pursued by the Secretary-General through two distinct processes, and recognizes that the two processes may be complementary;

18. *Recalls* its decision that the desirability of the continuation of the Internet Governance Forum would be considered again by Member States in the General Assembly in the context of a ten-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society in 2015;

19. *Notes* the report of the Chair of the Working Group on Improvements to the Internet Governance Forum, and takes note that in paragraphs 28 and 29 of its resolution 2011/16, the Economic and Social Council decided to extend the mandate of the Working Group until the fifteenth session of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in order for it to complete its task in accordance with its mandate and urged the Working Group to submit its recommendations to the Commission at its fifteenth session, which should constitute an input from the Commission to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council;

20. *Stresses* the need for the enhanced participation of all developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in all Internet Governance Forum meetings, and in this regard invites Member States, as well as other stakeholders, to support the participation of Governments and other stakeholders from developing countries in the Forum itself, as well as in the preparatory meetings;

21. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation on public policy issues pertaining to the Internet;[10]

22. *Recalls* paragraph 22 of its resolution 65/141, takes note of the consultations convened by the Secretary-General through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, including the meeting held in New York on 14 December 2010, and invites the Secretary-General to hold further open and inclusive consultations involving all Member States and other stakeholders with a view to assisting the process towards enhanced cooperation in order to enable Governments on an equal footing to carry out their roles and responsibilities in respect of international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet but not in respect of the day-to-day technical and operational matters that do not impact upon those issues, through a balanced participation of all stakeholders, especially developing countries, in their respective roles and responsibilities, as stated in paragraph 35 of the Tunis Agenda, requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-seventh session, through the Council, a report on the outcome of those consultations;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, through the Commission on Science and Technology for Development and the Economic and Social Council, a report on the status of the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution, as part of his annual reporting on the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society at the regional and international levels;

24. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-seventh session the item entitled "Information and communications technologies for development".

[10] A/66/77-E/2011/103.